

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please insert a new paragraph at page 20, between lines 7 and 8, as follows:

In one embodiment of the production method of the present invention the above-mentioned Dicer mutant is produced using a vector having a promoter that is capable of functioning at a low temperature (e.g., the pCold-series vector as described in WO 99/27117) according to an exemplary method.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 22, line 17, as follows:

| It is possible to ~~promoter~~promote an activity of degrading a dsRNA by using a CspB protein and a protein having an activity of degrading a dsRNA in combination. According to the method of the present invention, it is possible to promote an activity of producing a dsRNA of a specific length for any of the proteins having an activity of degrading a dsRNA to produce a dsRNA of a specific length as described in (1) above (e.g., functional equivalents such as Dicer mutants, native Dicers or commercially available recombinant Dicers).

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 29, line 16, as follows:

The kit of the present invention may contain a protein having an activity of degrading a dsRNA which ~~as~~has an activity of producing a dsRNA of a specific length and/or a protein having an activity of synthesizing an RNA. One as described in (3) above can be preferably used as the protein having an activity of degrading a dsRNA and/or the protein having an activity of synthesizing an RNA. Furthermore, the kit of the present invention may contain a buffer for stabilizing a Dicer mutant as described in (1) above.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 47, line 10, as follows:

First, synthetic primers 5 and 6 (SEQ ID NOS:14 and 15) were synthesized using a DNA synthesizer based on the nucleotide sequence available to the public under GenBank accession no. AB028449, and purified according to a conventional method. The synthetic primer 5 is a synthetic DNA that has a recognition sequence for a restriction enzyme KpnI at nucleotide 9 to nucleotide 14, and a nucleotide sequence corresponding to amino acid 679 to amino acid 685 in the amino acid sequence of human Dicer (SEQ ID NO:1) at nucleotide 16 to nucleotide 36. The synthetic primer 6 has a

recognition sequence for a restriction enzyme HindIII at nucleotide 9 to nucleotide 14 and a nucleotide sequence corresponding to amino acid 1919 to amino acid 1924 in the amino acid sequence of human Dicer (SEQ ID NO:1) at nucleotide 18 to nucleotide 3635.